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TRAFFICKING IN LIQUOR

WITH THE

NATIVES OF AFRICA.

PRINTED FOR THE COMMITTEE OF DELEGATES OF BRITISH MISSIONARY SOCIETIES APPOINTED TO CONSIDER THE SUBJECT OF TRAFFICKING IN LIQUOR WITH THE NATIVES OF AFRICA.

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PREFACE.

The following pamphlet embodies the information which has been collected by Delegates appointed by the various Missionary Societies working in Africa to consider the question of the traffic in liquor in that continent.

It should, however, be understood that the writer is wholly responsible for the wording of the pamphlet, and that the Delegates have not as yet formulated any proposals as the result of their inquiry. Any course of action which the Delegates may hereafter propose will have to be submitted to the various Societies by whom they have been appointed.

HORACE WALLER, F.R.G.S.

1*st January*, 1887.

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Our pity for the oppressed is apt to range itself under three degrees of comparison. We are sorry for the man who is weighed down by his adversary, more grieved still when he struggles to be delivered from his friends; but when in his exhaustion he mutters, "Save me from myself," none but the hardhearted will turn away, careless as to what his case may be.

Now a cry has come to this country of late from a people with whom, whether we like it or not, Providence evidently intends to keep us face to face.

Our ears are pretty well accustomed by this time to plaints on the score of humanity from both North, Central, and Southern Africa; but the present appeal has something so very strange—so totally unlooked-for about it, that it must surely gain a hearing without much difficulty.

In a word, there has broken out, not only in one or two, but in several densely populated tracts of Africa, an intense desire to shake off the drunkenness which has arisen as a consequence of contact with civilisation.

To fully understand the import of this, we must first of all diagnose the disease of our poor African patient, the better to comprehend his anxiety about himself.

Perhaps some discoverer will yet find a people in an odd corner or odd island of the world with whom the knowledge of making the wherewithal to become intoxicated does not exist; but he must give up all search in Africa, because it is hopeless. The sap of various palm-trees, the juice from the cashew apple, the thick acid beer of the Kaffir kraal of the Zambesi tribes and the people about the lakes; the

plantain wine of Uganda—these and many other stimulating concoctions, some very nice, others very nasty, to our way of thinking, are to be found throughout the length and breadth of the continent, together with an almost universal desire to abuse them rather than use them in a rational way. Since the days of the great dispersion in the plain of Shinar, man has wandered hither and thither, never relaxing his hold of the few facts which he started with—his little stock in trade which was to preserve him in the lands of his strangership. To make fire, to whittle a bow and feather an arrow, to char and dig out a tree trunk for a canoe, to make a net for bird, beast, and fish, these he has clung to, *and to his brew!* Brew he must, and brew he does indeed, when we find him settled down in some valley in Central Africa, in the short glinting time of peace and plenty which occasionally throws a bright beam for him across his village gathering-place, through holes in the dark thunder-cloud of bloodshed and misery that seldom or never lifts entirely. So matters have been for many a day, indeed long before that time when, in the forked stick we still see everywhere in tropical Africa, he was marched off with galled neck that he might take his place with other famous slaves in Egypt. We find him depicted in the old wall-paintings doing the same steps in the land of his bondage which in nights of freedom he had danced round his chief's "pombi" pot: steps which are the current fashion to-night in the Manganja hills, if it is full moon.

So far he was, perhaps, neither better nor worse by flux of time when the Bristol merchant found him out, and when plantations yearned for his presence.

Here then we come to the indictment against the white merchant which is spread back over many generations. He is accused of having found the African very given to carouse and drink, and he has engrafted upon this desire of his nature an intensified one, which will be satisfied with nothing short of gin and rum. If pombi has slain its thousands, alcohol has in turn destroyed its millions, and every drop of it has been taken to the tribes. The trader of to-day has much to contend with. His ancestors have sown, and he reaps the consequences. For generations the West Coast negro has been accustomed to see the ocean cast up the powder-keg, the rum cask, and the demijohn—these have been the shells of his strand. Borne from Bristol, Liverpool, Hamburg, and Holland, they come rolling through the surf out of steamers and sailing vessels. For hundreds of miles in the interior, the square-shouldered

bottles are as well known as the beads and brass wire which are the usual currency, and along their path sorrow follows.

The idea of drinking spirits is inseparable from the notion of European life in the ken of the native. Owing to the relaxing climate of the rivers, there are few factories which cannot tell their tale of hard drinking and certain death as a consequence. But we are repeating an oft-told story, and those who are likely to read these pages have probably made themselves acquainted with the state of the West Coast in some degree. Whatever milk of human kindness the traders may have possessed at one time seems to have passed into a milk-punch stage; competition is relentless, times are very bad, palm-oil has fallen to a ruinous rate—true, the price of spirits has fallen too; but the degradation of the wretched tribes of West Africa has reached a depth which is appalling. Nor is this altogether to be wondered at when we turn to a few facts and figures before us. Here is a statement, for instance, showing the quantities and value of spirits of all kinds exported to Africa from the United Kingdom, Germany (Hamburg and Bremen),* Portugal, and the United States, of recent years:

			Gallons.		£
Great Britain sent in		1884 . . .	602,328	value	117,143
Germany	,,	,, . . .	7,136,263	,,	713,634
Portugal	,,	1882 . . .	91,524	,,	6,166
America	,,	1884–5 . .	921,412	,,	56,889
		Total	8,751,527		£893,832

Few men can be more fitted to testify concerning the extent to which Liquor Trafficking with the Africans has reached than Mr. James Irvine of Liverpool, and as the following statement written to us by him shows, it is not without its very strange anomalies; he says:—

"It is very difficult to give you an account of the ramification of the drink traffic on the West Coast of Africa—not because there is little to be said, but because what is to be said is only a repetition of the oft-told story in every part of the world.

"The extent of the trade is so prodigious, that I think the following estimate of the quantity annually poured into 'the rivers'—or the delta

* There are probably other shipments from Germany to Africa, but we can only get at Hamburg and Bremen statistics, accurately and officially.—Editor.

of the Niger—is sufficiently eloquent, and relieves me from the necessity of further remark regarding the evil.

"Such a flood of rum and gin cannot be consumed without causing an awful amount of demoralization.

"It is not possible to get at actual shipments, but I am sure I do not overestimate the quantity, when I put down 60,000 hogsheads of 50 gallons each, as the annual consumption in the rivers of Niger, Benin, Brass, New Calabar, Bonny, Opobo, Old Calabar, Cameroons, &c.

"In other words, this compressed space lying between 4° 8′ east longitude, or say 250 miles of coast consumes 20,000 tons, or say twenty ships full of 1000 tons each every year.

"The amazing thing is that all this traffic is conducted in the main by not over a dozen firms, the members of which are most excellent men, many of them, I believe, sincere Christians.

"Convince them they are wrong and induce them to withdraw, what is accomplished? Simply, worse men take their place.

"When for fifteen years I conducted my business without it, I was constantly asked what was accomplished, and told that if I continued to decline, as much rum as ever would go in—I felt between me and Africa that was true, but between me and my conscience, it was another matter, and ultimately I withdrew, as success was impossible without it.

"Notwithstanding, I cordially join with you in believing that no effort should be spared to stop or reduce the evil—it is the Lord's work, and He can make it succeed in ways unthought of by us at present."

We think, then, we have here a tolerably clear guidance, but we cannot get at the full extent of the disease. For instance, we are in the dark as to the extent of the evil with which France is mixed up, and her trade and energy are just now conspicuous on the African seaboard. Neither can we go into the quality of the stuff dealt out to the native tribes. Suffice it to say that, in some instances, and to save carriage expenses, spirit of great strength is used in this trade; it must, of course, be "washed," to use a technical term—that is, diluted many times before even the throat of a Brass River negro can tolerate it; the traffic in this particular article is forcing its way, we regret to add, in East Africa.

So we stand round our very "sick man." It has been a long and furious fever in his veins, but our attention is called to symptoms which, in the eyes of those who know him best, make it appear that a crisis has come at last. But let us not disguise from ourselves how ill he really is.

Writing from Brass River, at the end of 1883, Archdeacon Hamilton says: "To give you some faint idea of its extent (the drink traffic), one of the National African Co.'s steamers recently carried 25,000 cases of gin and demi-johns of rum, and this was to supply two factories only." As a natural result we find that towns like Bonny are almost given over to drinking. Look at a specimen of everyday life there. As

a sample, we take March 5th, 1885. Archdeacon Hamilton writes:—

"In all parts of the town we found tumbo (palm wine) being sold, and it was evident there was a very large consumption of it, and many were under its pernicious influence. . . . In going through the town on Monday morning to call on some of the chiefs, I noticed that almost every few yards gin was being sold, just as tumbo was on Saturday afternoon, and this appears to be the common practice in the place—to drink gin in the morning and tumbo in the evening, so that there are other evils to contend with besides heathenism and cannibalism."

The Rev. Hugh Goldie has been at his post as a missionary in Old Calabar for almost forty years. He has recently returned to Africa and this is what he says in the 'United Presbyterian Magazine' before his departure:—

"But as the outlying work of our Church in its various mission fields is greatly affected by the drink traffic, permit me to supplement the report of the Committee by a few statements regarding this evil influence, so far as it is felt in the Calabar Mission. The children of Ham inhabiting the regions of inter-tropical Africa have ever been the outcasts of the human family, counted as lawful prey by the so-called Christian races, and taught to prey upon each other until they became as much assimilated to the beasts of their forests as they could be and yet continue human. Thus brutalized by the slave trade, they give themselves without restraint to the indulgence of their lusts and appetites to the utmost extent of their means. This being the case, the utter degradation into which that traffic sunk them is being perpetuated by the flood of fire-water found amongst them; and the efforts which the Church through its missionary agency so zealously puts forth to raise them, find in this that which goes to neutralise them more than even the heathenism of the country. Among the tribes which traffic with Calabar our native Christians find it difficult to propagate the truth they have acquired, remarking that the people are generally found in a state of semi-intoxication, and are disinclined to listen,—caring for nothing but strong drink. As far into the interior as we have yet penetrated, we found the gin bottle had preceded us, and saw it at various places, having been emptied of its contents, built up in orderly structure, apparently to make a potent *juju*. In such a state of things half of the expense of missions in money and life may be fairly charged to the account of the drink traffic, and while it continues the Church cannot hope for the success she aims at, in the bringing of the heathen peoples among whom she labours to the knowledge and obedience of the gospel.

"The moral aspect of the question is supreme, but its economical aspect is also very important. Commerce is employed as a means of elevating Africa; and if of a useful kind, is a most powerful means. But in opening new roads for our manufactures, we open new channels to the destructive flood, so that the benefit intended to be conferred is neutralized by the accompanying evil. I was much disappointed to see it stated in the newspaper account of the Berlin Conference on the formation of the 'Free Congo State,' that the motion of the British representative to exclude the drink traffic therefrom was not entertained. A great part of the 'fire-water' poured into the west coast tribes comes from Germany, and

probably trade influence in that country was powerful enough to put aside this proposal, so wise and beneficent. Should the philanthropic design of the projectors of the 'Free State' find accomplishment in its formation, and put an end to the slave raids which lay waste various parts of the interior, little benefit after all will be conferred on the poor people, the way being thereby opened for the entrance of the drink traffic among them.

"One principal cause of the depression of trade existing at present in this country is doubtless, as is alleged, the vast amount of money spent in intoxicating drink; and we may well wonder that God continues to clothe our fields with harvests, when so much of the food He provides for us is destroyed and converted into that which is the cause of so much evil. But the same cause operates against our manufacturing interest throughout the world. When Africa expends so great a part of the product of its industry in strong drink, it can have little to give for that which is profitable to itself or to us. A friend mentioned to me lately that a member of a Glasgow firm stated to him that he formerly employed a large number of looms weaving cloth for the African market; now he has not one. A trader in the Calabar river wrote recently to his principals to send no more cloth,—drink was the article in demand. Mr. Joseph Thomson, in his recent journey into the Niger regions, found this evil so abounding therein, that it will render hopeless the demand, anticipated by some, by the natives for unlimited supplies of calico, as effectually as will the sterility of the eastern countries through which he formerly travelled.

"In all its effects, moral and economical, this traffic is only evil: impeding the work of the Church at home, marring her mission work abroad, and destroying beneficial industry. The Christian community in past times aroused the nation to abolish the slave trade and slavery in British territory. A like task is now before it, the awakening of the nation to abolish this drink traffic."

One could continue this story of misery indefinitely from the testimony of witnesses on the spot, but it is useless. The disease is plain enough to its most repulsive details. We have in the African one whose strength of character is so far below that of the European that he easily becomes a victim when a dead set is made at him, and he is driven in upon his weak points. You have no need to go farther than the storehouse of the first West African factory to know what those weak points are, and the form of the attack. His natural propensity to drink has been pandered to until things could hardly be worse.

Mr. Joseph Thomson, F.R.G.S., recently laid before the members of the Manchester Geographical Society his views upon the subject. His experience of the African tribes is now considerable, and his observations are shrewd and to the point. We may presently have occasion to quote him again. Speaking of the West Coast trade in general, he says:—

"In the notorious gin trade, however, lies a still greater evil. It is

indeed a scandal and a shame, well worthy to be classed with the detested slave trade, in which we had ourselves ever so prominent a part. We talk of civilising the negro, and introducing the blessings of European trade, while at one and the same time we pour into this unhappy country incredible quantities of gin, rum, gunpowder, and guns.

"We are so accustomed to hearing a delightful list of the useful articles which the negro wants in return for the products of his country that we are apt to think that the trade in spirits must be quite a minor affair. Banish all such pleasing illusions from your minds. The trade in this baleful article is enormous. The appetite for it increases out of all proportion to the desire for better things, and, to our shame be it said, we are ever ready to supply the victims to the utmost, driving them deeper and deeper into the slough of depravity, ruining them body and soul, while at home we talk sanctimoniously as if the introduction of our trade and the elevation of the negro went hand in hand. The time has surely come when, in the interests of our national honour, more energetic efforts should be made to suppress the diabolical traffic. There can be no excuse for its continuance, and it is a blot on Christian civilisation." ('Manchester Geo. Mag.' Jan. 27, 1886.)

We have purposely begun with the West Coast, because it is more closely in touch commercially with England than other parts of the Continent; but what we are about to relate has its remarkable counterpart in more remote quarters.

Then it appears that these unfortunate people, who have so long suffered from the liquor traffic, now realise what national intoxication is rapidly bringing them to, and they appeal to be delivered from themselves, for they feel they are powerless to resist temptation. They have had to do with Europeans and Europeans. In the hand of one there is the Bible, the other rolls his rum cask on shore; but truth has so far prevailed that the native leaves the merchant to implore the aid of the missionary. We must not wonder if he is a little strange to the ways of getting a hearing in England; but, making allowances for that, we will let King Maliké of Nupé speak for himself and his people.

Here is a translation of a letter written in the Housa language to gain Bishop Crowther's ear; he—himself an African—for his part, calls the earnest attention of the Church Missionary Society authorities to its purport. King Maliké is a Mahomedan, but none the less quite ready to ask the advice and accept the good counsel of the Bishop whenever he or his people get into difficulties which are beyond them; so in October, 1885, he makes this appeal (the intermediary is the Rev. C. Paul) in the following words:—

"Salute Crowther, the great Christian minister. After salutation, please

tell him he is a father to us in this land; anything he sees will injure us in all this land, he would not like it. This we know perfectly well. The matter about which I am speaking with my mouth, write it; it is as if it is done by my hand. It is not a long matter; it is about barasá (rum or gin). Barasá, barasá, barasá; by God! it has ruined our country; it has ruined our people very much; it has made our people become mad. I have given a law that no one dares buy or sell it; and any one who is found selling it his house is to be eaten up (plundered); any one found drunk will be killed. I have told all the Christian traders that I agree to everything for trade except barasá. I have told Mr. McIntosh's people to say the barasá remaining with them must be returned down the river. Tell Crowther, the great Christian minister, that he is our father. I beg you, Malam Kipo (Mr. Paul), don't forget this writing, because we all beg that he (Crowther) should beg the great priests (Committee C. M. S.) that they should beg the English Queen to prevent bringing barasá into this land.

"For God and the Prophet's sake! for God, and the Prophet His messenger's sake, he must help us in this matter!—that of barasá. We all have confidence in him. He must not leave our country to become spoiled by barasá. Tell him, may God bless him in his work. This is the mouth-word from Maliké, the Emir of Nupé."

There is another feature in this appeal which deserves passing notice. A current belief prevails—indeed, it was conspicuous at the Berlin Conference—that the Mahomedan tribes are very little exposed to this devastating traffic in spirits. Here, then, is one of the most powerful Emirs having his own say on the matter, and it appears to be pretty conclusive. From Mr. Joseph Thomson's account in the lecture from which we have already quoted, it would seem that King Maliké and the National African Company do not hit it off together very well, and Mr. Thomson had to fetch a compass round the Nupé territory, and trust to hearsay for what goes on there. However, it is a matter for congratulation that, owing to laudable purposes on the part of the Company, combined with the determination of the king, the importation of spirits fell off some 25 per cent. last year in these negro districts, and the business appears to be generally on the decline. Writing from Sierra Leone, Mr. Thomson says:—

"To a man, the Krūboys have spent years in contact with such ameliorating influences as are to be found in those parts, yet their tastes have risen no higher than a desire for gin, tobacco, and gunpowder. These they get in return for a few months' or a year's labour, to go back home and for a few short days enjoy a fiendish holiday. I visited one of their villages, and such a scene of squalor and misery I have rarely seen."

Writing from inland:—

"In my last letter you will remember in what strong terms I spoke

of the traffic in gin and other spirits on the coast. With great pleasure I have noticed a vast change for the better as we proceed inland; and now, at such places as Abutshi, it is quite a pleasure to look through the warehouses and note the immense stores of bales of cloth, along with a great variety of European hardware, and the relatively insignificant supply of gin." ('Good Words,' January and February, 1886.)

Very naturally the whole question of native demoralisation cropped up at an early stage, when the delegates from the European Powers assembled themselves around Prince Bismarck's "horseshoe table" at Berlin. All seemed agreed that such a gigantic scheme as the formation of a Congo State carried with it the gravest responsibilities. Count de Launay, on behalf of Italy, expressed a sincere desire that the liquor traffic should be placed under strict control, and Great Britain and the United States were, through their delegates, of the same mind. Anxiously hovering around the members of the Conference were honest Scotch traders and missionaries, who, for the very love of Livingstone, have followed his footsteps, and taken up his *rôle* in the lake districts of Africa. These urged strenuously that the tribes with whom they have their dealings might be spared decimation, for hitherto not a keg of spirits has ever sullied their own converse with the Africans.

It may be as well to turn to some of the transactions at the Conference. We find them in a special Blue Book.*

Without being uncharitable, and certainly in full consciousness of the great difficulties surrounding the whole question of restricting an already rampant and lucrative trade, we are fain to confess that we meet with disappointment. On the basis that "if you have not a virtue affect one" (and whilst you are about it we suppose you may as well flavour it heavily with sentiment), we find the Portuguese representative (p. 46) stimulating his colleagues to great efforts. M. Serpa (Portugal) reminds them—

"that the Italian ambassador, on the grounds of moral considerations, demanded the prohibition of the importation of spirituous liquors and of powder into the territories in question. Animated by the same motives, M. Serpa proposes to prohibit also the importation of wooden collars, whips, and other instruments of torture made use of by slave-proprietors.

"As the result of the explanations exchanged on this subject, Count de Launay and M. Serpa arrive at an agreement with the President in admitting that an insertion of their wishes in the protocol will suffice to fulfil their intentions."

We do not wish to digress into side issues, but the slave

* Africa, No. 4, 1885. Protocols and General Act of the West African Conference.

trade and the rum trade have been inseparable for a century and more. M. Serpa must know, and none better, that the deportation of slaves from the West Coast to the Portuguese islands of S. Thomé and Principé, within the last two years, has become a distressing scandal. British officers of high rank, who have had to witness these disgraceful transactions on their way home from the Congo river, must have despaired when they read such attempts as those of Portugal to pose as the friend of the slave.

However, as time goes on, we find that, to prevent misconception, it is very necessary for the members of the Conference to control the expression of their personal feelings, lest it should come about that the liquor traffic would end in being controlled too! This eventuality would have struck dismay into the very heart of Hamburg, and was, of course, a thing to consider; not that Hamburg stands alone, by any means.

Count de Launay (Italy), before the Assembly enters upon the deliberations indicated for the day's proceedings, begs to make a few observations on the subject of Protocol No. 3. He desires to place on record, in order to avoid any erroneous commentary on the subject of the explanations exchanged at the sitting of the 27th November, that he never spoke of a prohibition of the traffic of arms and spirituous liquors. He believed only, and he said so at the third meeting, that it would be necessary to try and remedy possible abuses by ulterior regulations (p. 67).

Sir Edward Malet (England) recalls the observations to which the commerce in spirituous liquors gave rise. The Commission has decided, as a last resource, to propose to the Conference the adoption of a wish, the text of which is reproduced in the 30th page of its Report. The Representative of Great Britain requests of the Conference to sanction this desire, and to order its insertion in the Protocol.

Count de Launay (Italy) establishes that he was the first to raise the humane question with which the Conference is at present occupied, and he supports the proposal of Sir Edward Malet.

Count van der Straten (Belgium) says that he has still some doubt relative to the practical efficacy which the wish submitted to the High Assembly will possess, if the Powers consider themselves relieved of their moral responsibility in consequence of this manifestation. The welfare of the native races of Central Africa is at stake. Count van der Straten urges the extension to all the territories of the free zone of the declaration of the principle which, in accordance with the present text of the wish, would be applied to the basin of the Niger alone. The Belgian plenipotentiary retraces the discussions which have taken place on this subject in the Commission. He recounts with emotion how, having lived in the midst of Indian populations, in contact with the missionaries who strove to impress upon them the seal of civilisation, he had noted the despair of those Christian priests who saw the Indian race perishing, succumbing to the excess of strong liquors. Count van der Straten has observed in the plantations of South America the same ravages caused by alcohol amongst black races, precisely the same as those which inhabit the centre of Africa. The Belgian Plenipotentiary says that the native races of the free zone

will be sober, or will soon cease to exist. There is, however, a difference between the effects produced by alcoholism on the Indian races and those of African origin. The negro does not succumb physically to drunkenness, he succumbs morally. If the Powers do not save him from this vice, they will make of him a monster which will swallow up the work of the Conference. Therefore Count van der Straten considers the wish mentioned in Baron Lambermont's (Belgium) Report to be insufficient. He would wish the Powers to take the moral engagement to continue their work, as they took it formerly in the Treaty of Vienna in regard to the suppression of slavery. The object is to reconcile the legitimate interests of commerce with those of humanity. Really to attain this end it is indispensable to complete the resolution of which the text was proposed by the Commission; the Belgian Plenipotentiary proposes to supply this want by adding to the wish actually under discussion the following paragraph, equally intended to be inserted in the Protocol, with the sanction of a vote of the Conference:—

"In expressing the wish that an understanding should be come to between the Governments to regulate the traffic in spirituous liquors, the Conference does not consider that it has altogether fulfilled its mission of humanity. It considers that it leaves the completion of its task to future negotiations to be undertaken by the Governments represented at the Conference as circumstances permit, with a view to reconciling the interests of commerce with the imprescriptible rights of the African races and the principles of humanity throughout the territory of the Congo."

Count de Launay (Italy) recognises the lofty sentiments just expressed by Count van der Straten. The Italian Ambassador is anxious to observe on this occasion that, in his two previous speeches on this subject, he had in view the territories of the Congo as well as those of the Niger, but that he did not pronounce himself in favour of an absolute prohibition of the traffic in spirituous liquors. Animated by these opinions, Count de Launay willingly supports Count van der Straten's proposal, because it meets the object which he himself has in view—that of reconciling the rights of humanity with the legitimate interests of commerce.

Mr. Kasson (U. S. America) thinks it indispensable to control the traffic in spirituous liquors. He is anxious that one more effort should be made with this object, and that for this purpese the question should be referred to examination by the Commission.

M. van der Hoeven (Netherlands) is of opinion that they cannot do more than recognise the rights of the States established in Central Africa to take steps to regulate and supervise the sale of drinks.

M. Busch (Under-Secretary of State for the Department of Foreign Affairs) expresses his entire sympathy with the philanthropic cause so eloquently pleaded by Count van der Straten; nevertheless, the ideas of the German Representative are still undecided as regards what practicable solution it could be possible to arrive at. He agrees with M. van der Hoeven that the only practical means for the time being will be the control of the sale of spirituous liquors, but that measures of this nature are not within the scope of the Conference. Consequently he could not venture to support the proposal of Count van der Straten, but he is prepared at once to associate himself with the wish formulated by the Commission.

Baron de Courcel (France) thinks that they must devote themselves to facilitating the control over the sale of spirituous liquors, but that is one of the attributes of the administration and the internal police which result naturally from local sovereignties.

The wish formulated by the Commission meets the views of Sir Edward

Malet, as, in common with those of the Conference, it will furnish the Governments with the moral force necessary to combat, as far as possible, the pest against which it is a question of guarding themselves.

M. Kusserow (Germany) draws attention to a precedent which he had already referred to before the Commission; the Siamese Government has recently concluded with various Powers a Treaty which permitted it to remedy the abuses of the trade in spirituous liquors. It is, in fact, in the initiative taken by the local Governments that the best remedy against the demoralisation of the populations by the abuse of strong drinks will be found. The wish which at this moment the Conference is deliberating upon is a guarantee that the local Governments will always find at the hands of the Powers represented in the High Assembly the co-operation which they may ask of them with this end in view.

Count van der Straten (Belgium) recognises the difficulties which the question presents, but he fulfilled a duty of conscience in presenting his motion.

In reply to a question of M. Busch (Germany), Mr. Kasson (U. S. America) says that he should wish a last effort to be made in the Commission to find a formulary which will unite the support of all.

Sir Edward Malet (Great Britain) also believes an attempt of this nature to be useful.

The President consults with the Conference as to the order in which it desires to pronounce upon the proposals which are now before it.

Count de Launay (Italy) requests priority for the wish presented by the Commission. Its adoption would mark a minimum which might ultimately be completed by the adoption of a proposal of larger scope, if they could arrive at one which would unite all votes.

The President puts to the vote the wish proposed by the Commission, and the Conference adopts it.

M. Busch then asks if the High Assembly wishes to continue to study the question, in order to seek a solution less restricted in its scope.

Baron de Courcel (France) thinks that the wish already voted renders account, to a just degree, of the various considerations which it was necessary to conciliate, and that it will practically have useful results.

Sir Edward Malet (Great Britain) asks if the effects of the wish in question will extend to the territories comprised in the basin of the Congo.

Baron Lambermont (Belgium) replies that the Commission confined itself to considering the English proposal, which only had the Niger in view.

Count de Launay (Italy) says that the opinions which he was the first to propound extended to the region of the Congo, as well as to that of the Niger.

Sir Edward Malet (Great Britain) thinks that it is right to examine now whether the effects of the wish ought not to be extended to the basin of the Congo.

M. van der Hoeven (Netherlands), points out that the adoption of the wish by the Conference was brought about by what it knew of the presence on the Niger of Mussulman populations, which as yet have not participated in the consumption of spirituous liquors. In the basin of the Congo, on the contrary, habits have been created which it would be impossible not to take account of; notably certain commercial customs have been established, according to which spirituous liquors, to some extent, replace money and are the principal instrument of exchange.

The President returns to the question, and proposes to refer it again to

the Commission, in conformity with the desire manifested by a certain number of the members of the Conference.

It is agreed to refer it.

Mr. Kasson (U. S. America) imagines even now that the declaration relative to commercial freedom, which has already obtained the votes of the members of the Conference, would not prevent the Riverain Governments from controlling the traffic in spirituous liquors amongst the populations which are under their jurisdiction (p. 133 *et seq.*).

The Plenipotentiary of Great Britain proposed to add to the Act of Navigation of the Niger an Article conceived as follows:—

"The transit of spirituous liquors is prohibited along the course of the Lower Niger."

This proposition afterwards took the following shape:—

"The Powers, so long as the waters of the Niger, of its branches and issues and its affluents, are or shall be under their sovereignty or protection, shall have the power to adopt, with regard to the transit of spirituous liquors along the said waters, the precautions which they may deem necessary in the interest of the native populations. According to information that his Excellency was good enough to give to the Commission, the Mussulman populations of these regions neither drink nor manufacture alcoholic liquors. The introduction of spirituous drinks would seriously endanger their moral and physical well-being."

The Conference, as the Protocols of the 19th of November and 1st of December testify, had already dealt with this question at the initiative of Count de Launay.

The Commission could not fail to identify themselves with the lofty sentiment which inspired the proposition of the English Ambassador; and they unanimously proposed to the Conference to express the wish that an agreement should be established between the Governments to regulate the question now treated of in a manner which will reconcile the claims of humanity with the interests of commerce, so far as the latter can legitimately be considered (p. 150 *et seq.*).

Observations by Mr. Anderson in the Discussion on Spirituous Liquors.

"We are desirous of drawing attention to the exceptional conditions in which the African populations which inhabit the basin of Middle Niger and the regions to the east of this river and of Lake Tchad are placed.

"The population of this country has been approximately estimated at about 40,000,000. The majority is composed of Mussulmans; the minority, in a proportion which it is impossible to estimate, of heathens. We have every reason for believing that these people do not consume spirituous liquors.

"The moral state of the inhabitants of the Congo differs absolutely from that of the coast tribes. The narratives of travellers and merchants acquaint us that the latter had the habit of fabricating and consuming intoxicating drinks before the introduction into their country of foreign liquors. Whilst very desirous of seeing a practical measure of some sort or other taken to repress the trade in spirituous liquors in those regions, we make full allowance for the difficulties which are raised by the existence of this want among the natives, and the tendency of trade to minister to its requirements; but in Mussulman countries the want does not exist, and will not make itself felt, unless the supply causes a demand.

"It would be a disaster for the humane cause, and a reproach to all civilised nations, if the result of contact with foreign commerce should give birth to a passion among the natives which would demoralise and degrade them. The interests of commerce do not demand the opening-up of this field to the traffic of spirituous liquors; that which it has is already too vast. Besides, if the commerce of any country must suffer from it, it would certainly be our own, as the English merchants are the only ones who have reached the Mussulman regions.

"The African Company, which possesses several establishments on the Benué, the river by which the districts in question are reached, is itself very strongly desirous to prevent the introduction of spirituous liquors. It knows that the advantages which might result from it from a financial point of view would be counterbalanced by the bad effect which would be produced on commerce by the return to barbarism of these countries, which, compared with those of the coast, have made certain advances in the path of civilisation.

"I should like to remark that the fact that Mussulmans are forbidden by their religion to drink spirituous liquors does not amount to an impassable barrier to them. Experience shows that the passion for strong drinks, when once developed in Africans, can no longer be restrained. In addition, one must not forget that the non-Mussulman slaves do not find themselves bound by any religious prohibition of this kind.

"Finally, I would beg to remark that, in my opinion, the Powers would find a precedent for a general understanding on this question in the assent which a recent proposal of Siam received. This kingdom demanded the modification of its treaties with the European Powers in such a manner as to allow it to repress the abuse of the trade in liquors. This fact is a striking example of the goodwill which the civilised nations display in co-operating in the interests of humanity" (p. 166 *et seq.*).

Passing to the order of the day, the President read a proposition drafted by the Commission with a view to forewarn the native populations against the abuse of spirituous drinks, and thus expressed :—

"The Powers represented at the Conference, wishing that the native population should be forewarned against the evils resulting from the abuse of spirituous drinks, express the wish that an understanding should be established between them, to settle the difficulties that may arise on this score in a manner which reconciles the rights of humanity with the interests of commerce, in so far as these latter are legitimate."

The President consults the High Assembly, and declares that the proposition is adopted.

M. Busch (Germany) adds that, in agreeing to the wish drawn up by the Commission, he desires it to be known that his Government would not consent that this wish should be interpreted in the future in a sense contrary to the interests of commerce, or that it should serve as a pretext for rules vexatious for the freedom of trade. All the stipulations concerning commercial liberty that the Conference had just sanctioned would become illusory if different States were given the right to exercise a control over the trade of others. The freedom of trade would then depend on the employés charged with its control, and they would easily follow it, on account of the rivalry between the different nations, who would establish in fact that differential treatment which all the Plenipotentiaries have joined to resist (p. 179 *et seq.*).

"Article 6.—*Provisions relative to Protection of the Natives, of Missionaries and Travellers, as well as relative to Religious Liberty.*

"All the Powers exercising sovereign rights or influence in the aforesaid

territories bind themselves to watch over the preservation of the native tribes, and to care for the improvement of the conditions of their moral and material well-being, and to help in suppressing slavery, and especially the Slave Trade. They shall, without distinction of creed or nation, protect and favour all religious, scientific or charitable institutions, and undertakings created and organised for the above ends, or which aim at instructing the natives and bringing home to them the blessings of civilisation.

"Christian missionaries, scientists and explorers, with their followers, property, and collections, shall likewise be the objects of especial protection.

"Freedom of conscience and religious toleration are expressly guaranteed to the natives, no less than to subjects and to foreigners. The free and public exercise of all forms of Divine worship, and the right to build edifices for religious purposes, and to organise religious missions belonging to all creeds, shall not be limited or fettered in any way whatsoever" (p. 306).

We have thus given, at some length, the widest sentiments of the several delegates, and our readers will detect between the lines quite sufficient to make them aware of the obstacles which stand in the way of those who, whether they be of the white race or the native tribes, are most anxious to see the trade in spirits fairly held within bounds. We do not hesitate to believe that in the opening-up of the Congo regions the shrewd trader has reckoned that he can safely pit his demijohns against Mr. Stanley's "Manchester goods," and his voice is heard in a refrain all through the duration of the Conference.

The rum-seller of the coast has only to take a glance over the shoulder of the philanthropist as he sits poring over the brightly-coloured map of the new Congo State, and he takes heart of grace. He smiles in his sleeve at the comfort which lies in the contemplation of local self-government and local option in all its beautiful simplicity, police regulations, and what not! There is plenty of time for him before these obstacles are likely to trouble him; he says little, but that does not prevent him planning the more!

We insert the testimony of the Rev. W. Holman Bentley,* as being likely to add weight to the above considerations, and the more willingly as we are now brought down to Loango, on the West Coast, and must, without loss of time, proceed to the better-known tribes of the south. He writes:—

"As to the trade in spirits itself, it is very rife in all the factories of the lower river. I believe that once I heard of 50,000 or 60,000 cases of gin at Mtoma as the annual sale in the factories of the Dutch House. Gin is nearly always sold in casks, but rum in demijohns (large bottles)

* Member of the Baptist Mission on the Congo for seven years.

or casks. Much stuff is doctored on the coast with absolute alcohol and colouring and flavoring matter, according to the custom of the district or a stock. Liquor is made up at a central factory, and 'washed' (watered) to the utmost extent which will be accepted by the natives at the various branch factories.

"As so much strong stuff is sent out, the number of gallons sent from Europe are multiplied many times before dealt out in Africa. In many places on the coast the natives will not accept 'washed' liquor, while in other parts they will themselves assist in 'washing,' carrying the water themselves.

"The demand for spirits is certainly great in the neighbourhood of the factories; indeed, it is about the only thing the natives seem to care for, and our trade friends laughed at the idea of our mission being able to travel and work without it. But we and our brethren of the L. M. S. have been able to do without it, although the Roman Catholic missionaries do not shrink from using it freely.

"Doubtless we may hear from old traders that spirit is the only thing that will induce a lazy African to work; but it would be a wild folly to seek information as to Africa and Africans from traders. They only know the people living near to their factories, who are debased by their contact with what is misnamed commerce and civilisation.

"When at Loango four years ago, spirits were the chief article of barter. The trader with whom I was staying laughed at the idea of my talking to the chiefs about labourers for our mission after eleven o'clock in the morning. He said that the principal men would be drunk at that hour.

"The result of such a state of things cannot be favourable to any industry, either native or European, except to a few distillers. Such natives will not have sufficient energy of mind and body for trading expeditions into the interior, while the heavy commissions or customs levied by such chiefs discourage the native trader. Sometimes as much as one-half, or at least one-third of the payments in barter is put aside for the native broker from the neighbourhood of the factory.

"Our manufacturing districts ought to second every effort to put a stop to this traffic, which fills the pockets of a few distillers, chiefly German and Dutch, while all legitimate trade and manufacture suffer considerably in consequence.

"I suppose no one will deny the evil influence of such a traffic; but few have any hope of being able to check it, and certainly philanthropic reasons only will not compel the public opinion to move. If, however, a good case can be made as to its effects on trade and manufacture, the chance of success is sure.

"I was talking to my Congo lad, Nlemoo, about it the other day, and he ridiculed the idea of putting the matter in the form of a question, and regarded it as a matter of course that energy would be destroyed if the present native traders were to be saturated with spirits.

"If the liquor traffic is wisely restricted, and some governments set up to restrain the violence and greed of the strong, better days will come. Missions unfettered by such hindrances would make better progress.

"At present not much spirit is carried into the interior on account of its weight. Salt, cloth, &c., are worth more than people would give for spirits. I hope that if the statesmen of Europe shrink from attempting to curtail this traffic in spite of its ruinous economy, the Congo Railway and Navigation Company may be induced to impose restrictive rates on the transport of spirits. Traders would never complain of curtailing a form of barter which close competition renders as little profitable as anything

else. At present no one can refuse to give spirits. If they did, they would necessitate the relinquishment of the trade itself.

"English houses may have shrunk from the slave trade, but few have done as our friend Mr. Bennett (of Bury, Lancashire), who gave up his African business because he was compelled otherwise to use spirits."

South Africa.

We now come to nations whose history has been interlocked with the enterprise of the European for many generations.

The Dutch and English Governments in South Africa have witnessed the extirpation of some tribes entirely, as, for instance, the Hottentots, and we do not hesitate to name "brandy" as the agent here.

It is not the less to be deplored when we see, as one outcome of this state of things, a prevalence of Dutch ascendency in the Cape Parliament at the present time, which renders it impossible for those who would prevent the trade in liquor to succeed in their efforts. The interests of the distillers of "Cape Smoke" are now studied, the natives in many parts have become too prosperous for some people's way of thinking, and the *mot d'ordre* is to thrust in the brandy cask under the altered *régime* wherever it is possible.

The reason of the bitter controversy which has been going on of late regarding the sale of spirits to natives in the Transkeian territory will be better understood by a reference to the Government Commissioners' Report on the Liquor Traffic, held some three years ago. We recognise, amongst the names of members, some of those most honourably known in modern Cape history:—

Report of Government Commission on Liquor Traffic.

The Commission were: Sir Jacob Dirk Barry, Kt., Judge President of the Eastern Districts Court; Hon. Charles Brownlee, Chief Magistrate of Griqualand East; William Buchanan Chalmers, Esq., Civil Commissioner and Resident Magistrate of the Division of Stellenbosch; Rev. James Stewart, M.D., Principal of the Lovedale Institution, Victoria East; Walter Ernest Stanford, Esq., Magistrate of Engcobo, Tembuland; Hon. Thomas Upington, Q.C., M.L.A.; Jonathan Ayliff, Esq., M.L.A.; William Bisset Berry, Esq., M.D.; Emile Samuel Rolland, Esq., M.A.; Richard Solomon, Esq., Barrister-at-law; John Noble, Secretary.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

"The Commission has been deeply impressed with the emphatic and urgent representations contained in nearly all the evidence taken, and especially from the natives themselves, on the evils arising out of the sale and consumption of strong drinks. All this evidence points in the clearest

way to the use of spirituous liquors (chiefly ardent spirits, the produce of the distilleries) as an unmitigated evil to the native races, and that no other cause or influence so directly increases idleness and crime, and is so completely destructive, not only of all progress or improvement, but even of the reasonable hope of any progress or improvement. Those members of the Commission who, for the purpose of taking evidence, had occasion to visit the Border districts, were eyewitnesses of the mischief, wretchedness, and misery which multiplied facilities for the sale of spirits, by licensed canteens in the neighbourhood of native locations, are producing; if unchecked, it can only have one result, and that is the entire destruction of that portion of the natives who acquire the taste for brandy. All the better class of natives, and even the heathen and uneducated portion, appear to be conscious of this, and have implored the Commission to suppress the evil which is bringing ruin on themselves and their country.

"In the territories of Transkei and Griqualand East, a prohibition of the sale of spirituous liquors to natives has heretofore existed and been enforced by law; and by Clause 8 of the conditions of the Convention with the Tembus, under which the Tembus became British subjects, it is expressly stated that 'it is understood that Government will prohibit the sale of liquors to all natives;' and the Amagwate Chief, Dalasile, who for a time refused to come within the provisions of this Convention, but whose country now forms part of Tembuland, 'begged that the Government would strenuously prohibit the sale of brandy in his country.' The Government appear to have earnestly endeavoured to fulfil these conditions; and we find that when application was made for the appointment of a Licensing Board at Umtata, the Under-Secretary for Native Affairs, in addressing the Chief Magistrate, Major Elliot, in a letter dated 7th January, 1880, stated: 'It is important that the sale of spirits to natives should be prevented in every reasonable manner possible, and, as a means to this end, the Government would rather that no licences for the sale of spirits should be granted. The Government, however, yields to the opinion you express as to the necessity for the sale to Europeans, and consents to the issue of licences for sale to this class of persons alone. As a means, and an effectual one, for preventing the sale to natives, care should be taken in the choice of men to whom licences are given, and to secure this it is undesirable that they should be granted otherwise than by the Chief Magistrate, who will thus alone be accountable to the Government on this important matter.' The effect of such prohibition has been, and continues to be, beneficial to the well-being of the natives, and helpful and necessary to the good government of the territories; and the Commission recommends the continuance of prohibitory law as provided for in sections 256 to 262 of the Native Territories Penal Code."

But it may be as well to dip at haphazard into these "emphatic and urgent representations." For once it seems that the old proverb *quot homines, tot sententiæ*, is at fault: here we find ex-Governors like Sir Theo. Shepstone, K.C.M.G.; ex-kings like Cetewayo; great chiefs like Kama (one of the most intelligent Africans that we know of); English Bishops, Local Magistrates, District Inspectors, Doctors, and men of all conditions running together from different parts of South Africa, and making common cause against this desolating brandy-drinking:—

Sir Theo. Shepstone, K.C.M.G., says, in reply to the question: You look upon it (drinking) as an evil? There can be no doubt about that. It causes more breaches of the peace than anything else, and there are many other social evils which it creates.

Rev. J. A. Chalmers, Minister of the Presbyterian Church, Graham's Town, says: If the people are to be saved at all, we must restrict the sale of intoxicants among them.

R. J. Dick, Special Magistrate, King William's Town, says: I am decidedly of opinion that no liquor should be sold in any native location. I think they (the natives) would support such law.

Rev. Dr. Callaway, Bishop of St. John's: Prohibited altogether if possible. The more sensible natives in this matter would be thankful for a law which would preserve them from their own wishes.

W. C. Jeffrey, Superintendent of Natives, Kamastone: I would prohibit the sale of intoxicating liquors *entirely and everywhere.* In this matter I would have class legislation, that it would be an offence to sell liquor to a native.

Captain Blyth, Chief Magistrate, Transkei, says: *Most certainly.* It is so at present in this district, and, considering the difficulties attending the prevention of the sale of spirits, it is well carried out (prohibition of importation), and it is the desire of all the best of the natives that liquor should not be sold in their district. The difficulties are that natives can cross the Kei bridge or elsewhere in the Colony and buy what spirits they want. Were canteens established in this district, utter ruin would be the result. It is a difficult question, and a uniform system should be established in all the districts.

Major Elliot, Chief Magistrate, Tembuland Territory: In my opinion the sale of spirituous liquor to natives should be prohibited, not only in the Territory beyond the Colony, but in the Colony itself. This opinion has, I am aware, an odour of class legislation, but where classes are so dissimilar as those forming the population of Her Majesty's South African Dominions, I consider class legislation not only desirable but absolutely essential. It would be abortive to prohibit the sale of spirituous liquors to natives in territories beyond the Colony if they could procure them by stepping across the colonial border.

Edward C. Bell, to the question: Should we listen to natives who appeal to prohibit the sale of liquor altogether in their locations, or wherever they live? Yes, we should.

Mr. Charles H. Driver, Resident Magistrate: Are you of opinion that there should be prohibition of the sale of liquor to natives? I think there ought to be some restriction.

E. J. Warner, Wesleyan Missionary, Mount Arthur: Would you prohibit the sale of liquor to natives in locations generally, or in the Colony? I would prohibit the sale generally.

W. G. Cumming, Esq., Resident Magistrate: No, I do not think that liquor should be sold anywhere to a native in native territory. I would apply the same principle to natives in the Colony. On the whole, I think that the natives themselves would approve of a law carrying out that principle.

Rev. T. Green, Missionary of the Church of England at All Saints: Would recommend that the sale of spirituous liquors be strictly prohibited.

James Rose Innes, Esq., C.M.G., Under Secretary for Native Affairs: Do you approve of the existing regulations in the Transkeian territories, that no brandy should be sold to natives? Certainly.

Maké, Sigidi, Smith Poswa, and about sixty-eight other headmen of

Idutywa: We do not wish to have canteens among us. A canteen ruins a man: brandy destroys our manhood. We say we are happy in this country because there are no canteens. . . . . Brandy is a fearfully bad thing. We would become wild animals here if it were introduced. If we had brandy we should lose everything we possessed: goats, sheep, and everything else; and these many wives, of which we are so proud at present, would become scattered to the winds. I say, do not let brandy come into the country.

Umqueke said: I am a brandy-drinker myself, but I know that what has been said is right. If brandy is introduced among us we shall lose everything we have.

Veldtman, Nogida, James Bangani, and about seventy-eight other Fingo headmen: We do not want to see a bottle of brandy if it could be helped. If possible it should be stopped altogether.

Zalala Tanka, George, and nine other headmen: I have nothing to say in reference to the brandy, because we objected to that a long time ago. It is very bad, and causes destruction among the people.

Cetewayo, ex-king of Zulus: Do you think it a good thing to allow the unrestricted sale of brandy?—It is a very bad thing, and would ruin the country.

Kaulelo and Fingoe headmen of Peddie say: Stop the canteens; that is where our misfortunes come from.

W. S. Kama and his Councillors say: All the headmen said yesterday that they would like to see all the canteens driven out of Kama's country. Even the drunkards themselves see that they are going to the bad with the evil, but cannot stop their thirst. We should like to have only coffee, sugar, and wheat. Our wives go to the canteens and drink. They will throw away their clothes and are naked. They are becoming lost to all sense of decency. There should be no canteens at all in the location. The white man must stop from giving us brandy if he wishes to save us.

Nathaniel Umhala, in reply to the question: Do you think brandy selling to the natives should be stopped? Yes.—Would the natives themselves support this? I think so.

Petrus Mahonga and Sam Sigenu: This brandy is destroying our nation, and no law would give us greater satisfaction than a law prohibiting it, to ourselves included.

Mankai Renga, a Tembu headman: In my opinion there should be no canteens in the country. I think the people ought not to be allowed to purchase brandy at all. It is killing the people, and destroying the whole country. I repeat, the people should not be allowed to buy it upon any consideration.

Umgudlwa, Mangele, Sandile, Vena, Sigidi, Sitonga, Ngeengana, Tembu headmen: We do not want canteens at all in the country. The canteen destroys the people. The people would not look upon it as class legislation if the natives were altogether forbidden from getting drink.

Rev. W. Sigenu: I should be glad if I did not see a single bottle of brandy in the whole country. . . . . Yes; I think that in the Colony brandy should not be sold to natives. . . . . Most of those who really have the good of the people at heart would agree with me in saying so.

Conditions on which the Tembus agree to be taken over by the Colonial Government: 8th. It is understood that Government will prohibit the sale of liquors to all natives.

Chief Dalasile's proposals: 8th. Dalasile also begs that the Government will strenuously prohibit the sales of brandy in his country.

Gangelizwe, Nyanga, Sangoui, Mepiti Xelo, Silas Pantshwa, Nqayi Cutalele, Dinase, Umgendiki, Umsengi, and twelve others: The people do not want free sale of brandy.*

At present licences are issued to keepers of canteens, &c., to sell spirits to natives of all classes (at first chiefs, petty chiefs and councillors only were permitted to drink), a permit signed by a magistrate, field-cornet or justice of the peace being first exhibited by the native.

One consequence of this is that our Home Government have been petitioned from many missionary and temperance societies to interfere. Mr. Upington, the Cape Minister, however, is quite equal to the occasion, and indignantly resents the interference of those whose ignorance he deems to be profound (see Blue Book. Cape Colony. Sale of Incating Liquors: Transkeian Territory. March 1886).

So on the whole we shall perhaps do better to quote the opinion of one who, from circumstances, may even know more than Mr. Upington. Here are quotations from a memorandum transmitted on the 17th June, 1886, to the delegates sitting on the inquiry at the Church Missionary Society's rooms, by the Rev. Alan G. S. Gibson, M.A., a Missionary working in the Transkei for the S.P.G. Society:

"As far as I have observed, drunkenness is not prevalent among the natives as a whole. The reason of this is that we have few white people, and those are generally separated from the natives, being concentrated into the farming districts of the north (Maelcar, Matatiela, Kokstad, &c.), or gathered into the two towns of Umtata and Kokstad. In the native magisterial districts the white people are very few.

"Kokstad is not surrounded by a native population; Umtata is so, and there has been there a good deal of liquor traffic done with the natives, which the Government has, I believe, exerted itself, locally, to repress. The traders' stores, scattered among the Kaffir population from place to place, have, as a rule, no licence; and, though often visiting them, I have never noticed illicit consumption of liquor.

"On the other hand, the native races have an intense liking for drink, when they have once tasted it. With them drink passes very speedily into drunkenness, and then demoralisation and ruin ensue. I should have no hesitation in saying that the future of the Kaffir depended upon drink being kept from them; and if it be recognised that the future of the country really rests in the hands of the natives, a truth which is now winning for itself recognition as a statement of common sense viewed entirely apart from any claims of philanthropy or Christianity, then we see that the interests of the empire demand the restriction of the liquor traffic in this part of her colonial possessions.

"The bulk of our people are heathen and uncivilised: they have naturally strong passions, and no moral or social or religious checks to

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* Extracts from Blue Book on Native Affairs for 1883. Cape of Good Hope.

restrain them; they must be restrained by the law *ab initio.* It is a case where there can be no medium.

"And this the natives are fully aware of themselves. When the recent Transkei liquor proclamation was promulgated, it was in a great measure the natives themselves who, by means of meetings held all through the country, protested against the increased facilities for purchase of liquor which they themselves would derive through this proclamation; and so strong a public opinion was brought to bear upon Government that the proclamation was amended.

"At that time, by order of the coadjutor-bishop, all the missionaries of the St. John's diocese brought the action before their people. At the meeting, held at my central station of St. Cuthbert's, Ncolosi, my people were all unanimous, whether Christian or heathen, in condemning the proclamation, stating that drink had ruined other tribes, and that if they got it amongst themselves it would ruin them also. The natives, as a whole, have sufficient common-sense to see this; they have not sufficient self-restraint to abstain from drinking when it is in their power.

"I should then say that, from my own observation, the evil is not yet great among us, but that there is a very real danger, amply proved by the past and the present, and that drunkenness would probably become very prevalent, against the wishes of the natives and to the ruin of the country, if drink were more widely possessed or greater facilities were given for its purchase by Kaffirs. The former would be the case if the white population increased and were more spread through the country; the latter eventuality depends on the action of Government. This looks ominous for the future, as the liquor proclamation has now been followed up by a measure, carried in parliament, abolishing the tax on brandy."

Again, as in the case of the Nupé people, we see in this instance that the unfortunate natives beg to be delivered from themselves, and it is indeed providential that the dread of the canteen prevails, for we can trace no disposition on the part of a Colonial Government, swamped as it is by the Dutch element, to respond to the appeal; in fact, the recent removal of the brandy tax fairly unmasks all remaining mystery.

But if we are encouraged to hope that there may yet be a strength raised up from within, whilst the helping hand is denied from without, such an augury is more than justified when we turn to Basutoland.

A very startling account is given of a movement amongst the Basutos in an article before us written in the *Christian Express,* published at Lovedale, in South Africa, on the 1st of February, 1886, and we heartily commend every word of it to our readers.

"SOBER BASUTOLAND.

"The two words, 'Sober Basutoland,' which stand at the top of this paper, will undoubtedly seem a contradiction in terms, to all who know the history of that unhappy country for some years past. When its subjugation could not be accomplished by the bullet of the Colonial forces,

another conqueror appeared in the shape of a silent spirit in the brandy bottle. For a time this foe carried all before him—sending the Basutos in numbers to their graves, and leaving many more but wrecks of their former selves. But a change came over the minds of the Basutos, and they resolved to exorcise this devil which was destroying them—and apparently they have actually carried out their resolution, and become a sober people. We stated this in our last issue on the authority of the Rev. A Mabille, whose initials only were given. But the fact was doubted by several of our contemporaries, and a desire was expressed for further information, with a view to the confirmation of the news. We are glad to be able to offer our readers a full account of how this change was brought about. It comes from an esteemed correspondent and missionary in Basutoland, whose well-written papers have before now appeared in our pages. He justly states that such a change has 'seldom been recorded in the annals of human kind.'

"This effort on the part of the Basuto people—described fully below—is a curious comment on the recent attempt to legalise the liquor traffic in the Transkei. It justifies the conclusion that nowhere has responsible government more signally failed in this country than in the attempt to deal with the native question, especially in the extra-colonial native territories."

We have not space to give the account alluded to *in extenso*, but here are some of the most interesting details:—

"Some particulars about the wonderful change that has taken place in Basutoland deserve to be published, not only in a mission paper, but also in those colonial papers in which native questions have so often been discussed.

"What the state of affairs in Basutoland was six months ago is very well known. 'Drunken Basutoland! Riotous Basutoland!' has been the common talk of all who take any interest in its future. . . . From Caledon to the heart of the Blue Mountains brandy had become a curse under which individuals, families, and the whole tribe were crushed without any visible hope of rescue.

"And yet, incredible as it may look, matters have suddenly taken a new turn. Our chiefs had all become 'total abstainers,' and use now their great influence to oblige their subordinates to renounce strong drinks. . . . It is a fact that for the last six months Letsie, Lerathodi, Mama, Masupha, and all the principal chiefs in Basutoland have not even tasted liquor, and that the bulk of their people have done the same. Strict watch is kept on the border to prevent either the Basutos going into the Free State and buying brandy there, or the white smugglers entering Basutoland with their accursed merchandise. Canteens, which were very common in Masupha's district, have disappeared, and heavy fines are imposed on those who have been caught in the act of trespassing against the orders of the powers that be.

"The representatives of the Queen's Government—with a conscience not of the Upingtonian brand, save the mark—I am happy to say, were of course working hand in hand with the missionaries. Besides advising the chiefs to give up drinking, they sent night and day patrols along the border; and not without effect, loads of brandy having been seized, and a wholesome fear being impressed on both white and black smugglers.

"The death of an important headman, called Mapeshuane, was a solemn warning given to our drunken chiefs. *Delirium tremens* at last

got the better of the iron constitution of the deceased chief. Everybody knew that drunkenness, and nothing else, had brought him to an untimely and dreadful end. And nearly all the other chiefs being more or less affected with that horrible malady, every one of them had good reason to think of the fate which awaited him if he did not speedily renounce drinking.

"Six months ago our Conference wrote to the paramount chief and all the headmen of the country a strong address, in which, after having stated the present unsatisfactory position of the affairs of the tribe and the ultimate results of drunkenness, they entreated the chief to set his face against the danger, by prohibiting the importation of brandy into his territory, and by giving his people a good example by renouncing the baneful drinking. That address was solemnly presented to Letsie and to the principal chiefs by the missionaries and delegates of their congregations. The answers we received were encouraging, and led us to hope that at last some effort would be made to save the country.

"Letsie himself took the matter to heart, and issued a proclamation calling on his people to realise the evils that brandy had already brought on the country, and urging them to put a stop to the demoralisation whose effects were only too apparent.

"Last, but not least, we had the visit from the Chief, Paulus Mopeli, Moshesh's own brother, who was formerly a member of our church, but who long ago became a heathen again by taking to polygamy and other native customs. Much of the good seed seems to have remained in his heart. He has at least kept a clear mind and a sound intelligence, as was becoming one who had long been in constant intercourse with that noteworthy chief Moshesh. From his location in the Free State he has looked with a watchful eye on the present distressing state of Basutoland, and six or seven months ago he undertook a long journey through that country, holding meetings with the principal chiefs in order to persuade them to reform. Mixing hymns and prayers with his moral and political orations, he accomplished a sort of missionary trip through Basutoland, and made a great impression on all those who heard his strong and clever appeals for temperance and unity. To him, I believe, is Basutoland indebted to a large extent for the happy change which has already been recorded.

"Let us not omit to say that famine and scarcity of money have also something to do with the present temperance mood in which we rejoice to see our people. No doubt the battle would have been fought under very unfavourable circumstances had the Basutos been provided with plenty of money, and thus been enabled to yield more easily to temptation.

"All these causes, working at the same time and towards the same issue, have been the means of checking the progress of drunkenness in Basutoland, and of relieving the people of the curse which was weighing so heavily on public and private life. We have not won the day yet; triumph is not yet at hand. We know too well that the rescue of a single drunkard is almost a miracle; *à fortiori* the rescue of a whole tribe. A little break in the dyke that keeps the stormy waters from the land may cause the whole country to be flooded again. One moment of weakness on the part of the chiefs may throw them back, along with their people, into the hands of an enemy that has not given up its prey. Temptations are plentiful, and the people are weak.

"With trembling hearts and much prayer we are looking at the course of events—every day of temperance being one more security against an overthrow of our hopes.

"What is to happen in coming days no one knows. But this we know,

that six months of temperance is a wonderful achievement; that, to the present time, no sign of an impending relapse of the Basutos into drunkenness is to be discerned; and that, with God's help, what seems now to be a temporary lull may become the normal and definitive state of the tribe."

When we go farther north, and ascend the East Coast of Africa, we do detect a spirit of earnest endeavour amongst the Natal colonists to keep drink away from the Kaffir. It is an unlawful act to give spirits or anything which may intoxicate him to the native, and an import duty of six shillings per gallon is levied so as to put brandy, gin, &c., beyond the reach of those who would turn it to a bad account.

But somehow or other "things always go wrong in Africa," and we find the Portuguese a few miles up the coast admitting spirits of all kinds at threepence per gallon! There is some probability of the Transvaal being opened out by a railway from the Portuguese port of Delagoa Bay, and then the tribes, which at present are cut off from intoxicants, will come under the scathing influence of a state of things mainly confined to the West Coast hitherto.

We reach the Portuguese settlements of the Zambesi, and the scenes of Dr. Livingstone's heroic explorations in the Lake districts, and here we see good and evil intent set violently in opposition to each other.

The African Lakes Company is manned by Scotch agents and employés who would do honour to any enterprise in the world. Their trading operations extend from the Port of Quillimane throughout the length of the Lower Zambesi, the Shiré river, Lake Nyasa, and up to Lake Tanganyika, and during their sojourn in the land not a glass of spirits has been sold or given to the natives. Two attempts have been made by other traders to follow on their good name and fame and to sell liquor to the natives, and, singularly enough, both these men have died violent deaths. In the one instance the trafficker was drinking from a demijohn in a chief's hut; by some means the spirit caught fire, and he was enveloped in flames, and died in a few hours, horribly burnt! In the second case a violent altercation took place between the trader and the most powerful of the Makololo chiefs respecting some ivory transactions; the white man finally shot Chipitula dead, and was in turn killed by members of the tribe. Nor are these the only instances in a series of the most marvellous tragedies which have happened to men whose deeds in this country have been calculated to thwart and undo the good brought

about by Livingstone's followers: tragedies startling enough to make the most sceptical admit that God's Hand is very plainly visible in the history of these efforts to raise the natives above that level to which the slave-trader has depressed them.

Mr. John Moir, the representative of the African Lakes Trading Company (Limited), who is at present in England, supplies some facts which we should like to put on record. He tells us that in the flat country lying near the sea, between the mouths of the Zambesi river and the Quillimane estuary, many distilleries exist. The material from which the spirit is made in some cases comes from Bombay, and is the well-known blossom of the "Moura" tree. At Inyando, on the Kwa-kwa stream, there is a distillery which makes 8 demijohns per day from 1½ sacks of Moura. There is another large one at Micahune on the Olindo river in the same district. Sugar-cane and the Cashew apple are cultivated largely for distilling purposes here. He adds:—

"The profits on the sale of spirits is 700 per cent. as conducted by some of the European houses. I heard it all figured out by one of themselves. This included a pretty liberal addition of water to some of the fouler liquid, so you have a very hard enemy to fight. I have seen boys and girls of about fourteen or fifteen years old, getting their wages in this poison."

It is, alas! true also that in the programme which the Portuguese Government fosters for the development of its African dependencies, an opium factory figures rather largely! But let Mr. Moir speak for himself:—

"At the Opium Company's place nearly the whole wages are paid in spirits. The Portuguese defend their action in this matter, saying it is the *only* thing that will induce the natives to work. So it is *to a very great extent* wherever the craving is established, and generally where the custom of trading in spirits has been introduced, it is very difficult and very costly to buy anything, without paying in part at least, with liquor. It very soon leaves disorder, dirt, dissipation and enervation behind it. I remember well the description given by one of my men of the havoc wrought by the drink of another trader in a beautiful little village where the head man had promised to sell us his ground nuts. The look of the village and the dispositions of the people seemed alike dreadfully changed for the worse."

By latest accounts two Russian Poles have begun to trade in spirits with the Shiré people at a station just within the mouth of the river, and in territory claimed by the Portuguese.

It must not be inferred from the above that spirits are never found in the interior of this part of Africa. It is a

common thing to find in the villages of the Hill Country the gin-bottles which have been taken thither by half-castes and others, but the thing is within very small compass, and has never attained as yet to the dimensions of "trade."

In times of plenty the natives manufacture immense quantities of native beer from maize, mapira (Kaffir corn), and other grains. Drunkenness and dancing prevail, and an enormous waste of corn (which would otherwise suffice to feed them towards the end of the year) is the consequence; then comes famine, with all its horrible accompaniments of fighting for food, and deaths through starvation. We mention this in passing to show that up to the present time the people of the Lake districts have not passed into the state of ultra-degradation which is at once the result of putting facilities before them for obtaining ardent spirits. Should this catastrophe be launched amongst them there is no doubt but what the infamous history of the liquor traffic and its results, as attached to our name in West Coast annals, will in due time be repeated. It is impossible to look upon the philanthropic work of the African Lakes Company, and also that of the planters of Mount Zomba, without sympathy and hope. It is a new experiment undertaken in faith.

Steamers, we repeat, are plying on lakes and rivers of East Central Africa: plantations of coffee and sugar are flourishing on Zomba; produce of all sorts is collected from the natives, but neither the Messrs. Moir, of the Steam Navigation enterprise, nor the Messrs. Buchanan, of Zomba, will permit any transactions in liquor. We need hardly add that the large Mission stations of the English and Scotch churches throughout East Africa uphold this *régime* to the utmost. We are anxious to emphasize this new departure in African trading, as it may serve to prove what is possible where the will is present, and it does establish an invaluable precedent, we repeat.

Few persons who have studied the wonderful development of prosperity at Zanzibar during the reign of Seyyid Burgash can have seen the efforts made by Germany of late to annex territory in East Africa without grave apprehensions. Resident as our Political Agent for twenty-two years, the influence of Sir John Kirk, G.C.M.G., has supplied just the backbone which was wanted to enable the State to take its place amongst the responsible and industrious kingdoms of the East. The Sultan of Zanzibar, a very strict Mahomedan, would of course be powerless to prohibit the development of

German trade, but it is a matter of sincere congratulation to find that an arrangement has been come to by which the obstacle of a 25 per cent. duty on the importation of spirits is interposed between the Hamburg distiller and the native, who is too weak in the presence of temptation to avoid poisoning himself with rum.*

How far the Hamburgers are likely to join hands with us in trying to help the African to raise himself may be inferred if we introduce a letter recently received from the Secretary of the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce. This epistle is in reply to one addressed to him by the Rev. R. Lang, of the Church Missionary Society. It is hardly necessary to remember the opinions we have gathered up from various travellers, agents and commissioners, whilst we have been making the circuit of Africa; suffice it to say that at last we have one here very different to the general run!

[*Translation.*]

"Chamber of Commerce,
"Hamburg, 18/6/86.

"HONOURED SIR,

"In answer to yours of the 10th inst., I beg to state that the Chamber of Commerce has had no opportunity to go into the question of the liquor traffic in Africa, nor is it known to them that in any part of Africa spirituous liquors are used as a currency and a circulating medium with the natives. The question of the liquor traffic has been brought before the public through the press, and frequently by the Imperial Diet warmly discussed. Merchants of this place interested in the African trade are of opinion that measures for the limiting of this trade are injurious to the development of the trade with those countries, and that the importation of those liquors as carried on at present has no injurious effect upon the natives. The assertions made by opponents that the cheap liquors imported into Africa are deleterious on account of ingredients contained in them have been disproved by an official investigation made upon ordinary so-called trade rum which was sent in by the Governor of the Cameroons.

"Yours respectfully,
(Signed) "DR. C. GUTSCHAM.
"*Secretary.*"

It is not our intention to follow the ramifications of the liquor traffic into the neighbouring island of Madagascar, or the sphere of our observations would become too large to

* We deeply regret to learn that France refuses to join England and Germany in this treaty, and insists on the old 5 per cent. duty for her own importations. As a consequence, an English house recently, on arrival, transferred a cargo of spirits consigned to them into the hands of a French agent who cleared it at 5 per cent.! A German has since availed himself of a similar arrangement!—EDITOR.

be drawn into focus. It is, however, much the same tale, only with this difference—we have a more intellectual and capable people to deal with in the Hova nation. But we cannot disguise our alarm when we know only too well that the influence of the Bourbon sugar planters is incessantly at work in the Indian Ocean. Thwarted in their cruel oppression of British coolies, and only too well represented in the French Chambers, the Madagascar expedition has been the consequence. At any time less preoccupied than the present it is most probable that some protest would have gone from this country against the Protectorate (!) now spread over the Comoro Islands by France. All these annexations mean simply sugar growing. Hitherto the extensive sugar plantations in the principal island of the Comoro group—Johanna—have been carried on through slave labour, either chartered by Europeans or used at first hand. We have had to notice through many long years the willingness on the part of France to allow her flag to be used in what for the sake of euphony has been termed the Free Emigration trade. This simply means populating these newly "protected" islands with slaves; and we dread lest, with all the facilities for making it, the tribes of the adjacent seaboard will become deluged with rum.

A great impetus has been given to the exportation of slaves from the East African Coast lately, and England's preoccupation with matters relating to her own internal economy is being felt terribly wherever she has hitherto undertaken to make her influence felt for the benefit of the tribes whence the captives are drawn.

We need hardly pursue the subject of the liquor traffic further northwards. When we leave Zanzibar and approach the Red Sea, we leave nations such as the Masai, the Somauli, and the Gallas, with whom traffic of this kind will probably not be opened largely.

Mahomedanism has firmer hold on the people when we approach the Soudan, and the North of Africa can hardly be classed with the regions through which we have traced the baneful effects of the trade in alcohol in one form or another.

There are one or two reflections which force themselves again to the front for a parting word before we close this inquiry.

Perhaps few are aware (except they are interested particularly in the subject) of the extraordinary diminution of drinking amongst the labouring classes of our own country. Say what we may, or think what we like of some of its

pardonable eccentricities, the "blue-ribbon" movement has had a success which must have astonished its most enthusiastic patrons. We find it no uncommon thing to meet "mineral-water" carts traversing the same districts where hitherto the brewer's dray alone has gone its rounds to cater for public-house requirements. When we see the same names on carts and bottles, showing that the breweries now have to manufacture these mineral-waters, it tells its own tale, and we know that a great change must have taken place in the habits of our people.

Is it not startling, then, to find that, amongst the least understood and the most hardly used of any of the nations with whom we are brought in contact, there should suddenly arise an inclination to break away also from the bondage of habitual intoxication? Perhaps we should least expect such a phenomenon in the rum-soaked countries we have traded with so long in West Africa, and hardly less so in Basutoland, where—alas that we must say it!—the presence of natives at all is an inconvenience to some! But the phenomenon does exist for all that, and it seems hard if the Africans are left to work out the problem by themselves of their elevation from an abnormal degradation.

Then, again, if a hundredth part of the aspirations of some are to be realised, the opening up of the Congo basin is to increase the commerce between Europe and savage Africa a thousandfold. We have drawn freely from the transactions at Berlin, and we are certain that no one who was present in that city during the Congress could be unaware of the enormous importance of this "Drink" question, because we maintain that the trader in liquor, once admitted to the country, will force his way farther and faster than any possible organisation which might be intended to set a limit to his activity. Rum is his skeleton-key in more senses than one!

A glance at the discoveries and the waterways alone which have been opened out is quite enough to show us that it must be many a long day, and at the end of many a long purse, before either the slave dealer or the liquor trafficker shall feel the land made too hot to hold him. Even then we are reckoning that the machinery will exist, at all events, on paper, and in international agreements, to curb him; but it is perhaps premature to make certain of it: nothing opposes an insuperable difficulty to the liquor traffic on the Congo at present.

Summing up all the evils of the past—evils intensified

by our treatment of this unhappy Continent—and looking towards the future, it would seem as if the revelation of the Congo's course is as the joint-hole in Africa's harness. Straight to the heart of the Continent can the merchant go. No plodding journey, day by day, through pathless swamps and deadly forests on foot; all this makes way now for the uninterrupted run of the steamer, week after week. What, then, is to be the result? The answer should, in some degree, depend upon the amount of interest and sympathy which can be assured to an attempt such as this to gain a hearing for the Africans. They are putting forward their spokesmen, who appeal to us in a tongue easily to be understood. England has long passed the A B C of the language of liberty; and, where she has helped to enchain a people with a desolating vice, she should be the first to offer a willing ear when she is asked to undo the wrong.

H. W.

*** Any communications likely to add more weight and interest to the subject will be thankfully received and considered by the Committee. These should be directed in the first instance to the Rev. R. Lang, offices of the Church Missionary Society, Salisbury Square, London, and headed "Liquor Traffic in Africa."

The following bodies have combined and are represented in the course taken:—

The Baptist Missionary Society.
The Church Missionary Society.
The Church of Scotland Foreign Mission Committee.
The Free Church of Scotland Foreign Mission Committee.
The London Missionary Society.
The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.
The United Methodist Free Churches.
The United Presbyterian Church Foreign Mission Board.
The Universities Mission to Central Africa.
The Wesleyan Missionary Society.

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